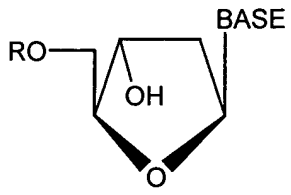
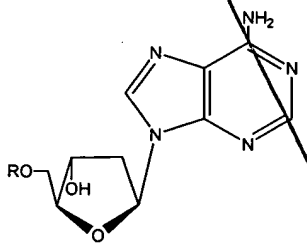
We claim:

1. A method for treating a host infected with hepatitis B comprising administering an effective amount of an anti-HBV biologically active 2'-deoxy-β-L-erythro-pentofuranonucleoside or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt or prodrug thereof, wherein the 2'-deoxy-β-L-erythro-pentofuranonucleoside has the formula:



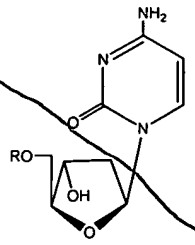
wherein R is selected from the group consisting of H, straight chained, branched or cyclic alkyl, CO-alkyl, CO-aryl, CO-alkoxyalkyl, CO-aryloxyalkyl, CO-substituted aryl, alkylsulfonyl, arylsulfonyl, aralkylsulfonyl, amino acid residue, mono, di, or triphosphate, or a phosphate derivative; and BASE is a purine or pyrimidine base which may be optionally substituted.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the 2'-deoxy-β-L-erythro-pentofuranonucleoside is β-L-2'-deoxyadenosine or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt or prodrug thereof, of the formula:



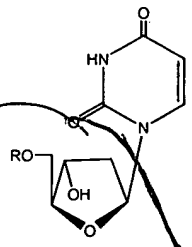
wherein R is H, mono, di or tri phosphate, acyl, or alkyl, or a stabilized phosphate derivative (to form a stabilized nucleotide prodrug).

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the 2'-deoxy-β-L-erythro-pentofuranonucleoside is β-L-2'-deoxycytidine or pharmaceutically acceptable salt or prodrug thereof of the formula:



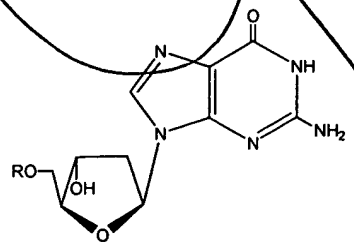
wherein R is H, mono, di or tri phosphate, acyl, or alkyl, or a stabilized phosphate derivative (to form a stabilzied nucleotide prodrug).

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the 2'-deoxy-β-L-erythro-pentofuranonucleoside is β-L-2'-deoxyuridine or pharmaceutically acceptable salt or prodrug thereof of the formula:



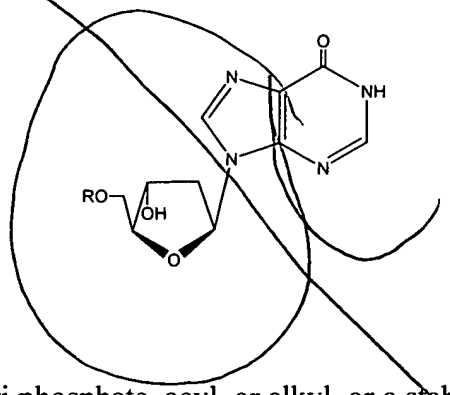
wherein R is H, mono, di or tri phosphate, acyl, or alkyl, or a stabilized phosphate derivative (to form a stabilzied nucleotide prodrug).

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the 2'-deoxy-β-L-erythro-pentofuranonucleoside is β-L-2'-deoxyguanosine or pharmaceutically acceptable salt or prodrug thereof of the formula:



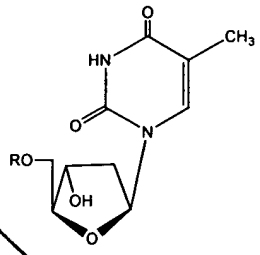
wherein R is H, mono, di or tri phosphate, acyl, or alkyl, or a stabilized phosphate derivative (to form a stabilized nucleotide prodrug).

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the 2'-deoxy-β-L-erythro-pentofuranonucleoside is β-L-2'-deoxyinosine or pharmaceutically acceptable salt or prodrug thereof of the formula:



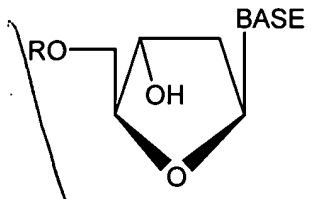
wherein R is H, mono, di or tri phosphate, acyl, or alkyl, or a stabilized phosphate derivative (to form a stabilized nucleotide prodrug).

7. The method of claim 1, wherein the 2'-deoxy-β-L-erythro-pentofuranonucleoside is β-L-thymidine or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt or prodrug thereof of the formula:



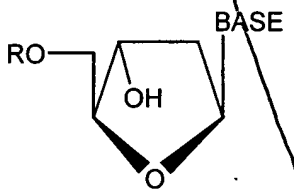
wherein R is H, mono, di or tri phosphate, acyl, or alkyl, or a stabilized phosphate derivative (to form a stabilized nucleotide prodrug).

8. A method for treating a host infected with hepatitis B comprising administering an effective amount of two or more anti-HBV biologically active 2'-deoxy-β-L-erythro-pentofuranonucleosides or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt or prodrug thereof in combination or alternation, wherein the 2'-deoxy-β-L-erythro-pentofuranonucleosides have the formula:



wherein R is selected from the group consisting of H, straight chained, branched or cyclic alkyl, CO-alkyl, CO-aryl, CO-alkoxyalkyl, CO-aryloxyalkyl, CO-substituted aryl, alkylsulfonyl, arylsulfonyl, aralkylsulfonyl, amino acid residue, mono, di, or triphosphate, or a phosphate derivative; and BASE is a purine or pyrimidine base which may be optionally substituted.

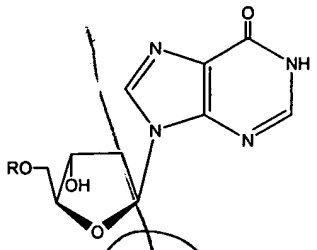
9. A method for treating a host infected with hepatitis B comprising administering an effective amount of an anti-HBV biologically active 2'-deoxy-β-L-erythro-pentofuranonucleoside or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt or prodrug thereof in combination or alternation with an additional anti-hepatitis B agent, wherein the 2'-deoxy-β-L-erythro-pentofuranonucleoside has the formula:



wherein R is selected from the group consisting of H, straight chained, branched or cyclic alkyl, CO-alkyl, CO-aryl, CO-alkoxyalkyl, CO-aryloxyalkyl, CO-substituted aryl, alkylsulfonyl, arylsulfonyl, aralkylsulfonyl, amino acid residue, mono, di, or triphosphate, or a phosphate derivative; and BASE is a purine or pyrimidine base which may be optionally substituted.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein the additional anti-hepatitis B agent is selected from the group consisting of 3TC, FTC, L-FMAU, DAPD, famciclovir, penciclovir, BMS-200475, bis pom PMEA-(adefovir, dipivoxil); lobucavir, ganciclovir, and ribavarin

11. A compound or pharmaceutically acceptable salt or prodrug thereof of the formula:



wherein R is H, mono, di or tri phosphate, acyl, or alkyl, or a stabilized phosphate derivative (to form a stabilized nucleotide prodrug).

12. A pharmaceutical composition comprising an effective amount of a compound of claim 11 in combination with a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

add a4